

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02

TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01

STR-08 CEA-02 AGR-20 SCI-06 DRC-01 /245 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8765

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FO

SUBJ: OPENING OF LEGISLATIVE SESSION

SUMMARY: FORMAL OPENING OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTED BY WIDE-RANGING SPEECH BY PRESIDENT THOMAZ, WHO APPEARED UNDIMINISHED DESPITE HIS 79 YEARS. PRESIDENT'S SPEECH TOOK UNFAMILIAR REFORMIST LINE.

1. ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE UNDER 1933 CONSTITUTION WAS FORMALLY OPENED NOVEMBER 19 WITH GREAT PAGEANTRY AND SOLEMENITY. DIPLOMATIC CORPS, CHURCH AUTHORITIES, AND OTHER VIPS GRACED OCCASION. MAIN EVENT WAS SPEECH TO LEGISLATORS BY PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC, AMERICO THOMAZ, WHO CELEBRATED 79TH BIRTHDAY SAME DAY.

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2. HIGHLIGHTS OF PRESIDENT'S SPEECH FOLLOW:

OVERSEAS - PRESIDENT BEMOANED HOSTILITY OF MANY COUNTRIES AND UN TO PORTUGAL ON ACCOUNT OF OVERSEAS POLICY, AND NOTED MISUNDERSTANDING OF GOP'S PURPOSES EVEN IN FRIENDLY COUNTRIES AND NATO ALLIANCE. HE REAFFIRMED "NATIONAL INTEGRITY" (I.E. NO INDEPENDENCE FOR OVERSEAS TERRITORIES), BUT STRESSED VALUE OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND ECONOMIC AUTONOMY FOR OVERSEAS PROVINCES "IN EVERYTHING THAT DOES NOT AFFECT OUR NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT OF CAETANO'S "AUTONOMY" POLICY IS UNUSUAL FOR THOMAZ.

3. ECONOMIC MATTERS - PRESIDENT CALLED FOR CLOSER ECONOMIC TIES WITH SPAIN AND ELIMINATION OF CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE WITH SPAIN. HE STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF NEW DEVELOPMENT PLAN (1974 THROUGH 1979), AND SAID ITS BENEFITS MUST EXTEND TO ALL. HE CALLED FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION TO AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND "AS PROGRESSIVE A POLICY AS POSSIBLE" TO IMPROVE WAGES AND FRINGE BENEFITS FOR WORKERS. SUCH POLICY MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY "TAXATION OF HIGH INCOMES, TO RESTRAIN AMASSING OF EASY FORTUNES AND RESTRICT SUPERFLUOUS CONSUMPTION."

4. OTHER DOMESTIC ISSUES - PRESIDENT CALLED FOR PROTECTION OF CONSUMERS AGAINST COLLUSIONS TO RAISE PRICES, SHODDY OR UNHEALTHFUL GOODS, AND MISLEADING ADVERTISING. HE ALSO GAVE SUPPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. PRESIDENT SAID WITH PRIDE THAT SAHELIAN DROUGHT WHICH HAD TORMENTED CAPE VERDE ISLAND DID NOT RESULT IN STARVATION THANKS TO GOP'S MASSIVE EFFORTS (PRESIDENT NOTED IN PASSING ABSENCE OF TERRORISM IN CAPE VERDE, "SINCE ITS ONLY BORDER IS THE SEA"). PRESIDENT PAID SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO ARMED FORCES AND CALLED ON OTHERS TO DO LIKEWISE.

5. COMMENT: PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON ENVIRONMENT, CONSUMER PROTECTION, TAX REFORM, AND AUTONOMY FOR THE OVERSEAS, COMBINED WITH ABSENCE OF SOME OF HIS USUAL LAMENTS OVER DISSOLUTION OF YOUTH, PORNOGRAPHY, DISRESPECT, DRUGS, AND EMIGRATION RESPRESENT MORE MODERATE AND PROGRESSIVE RHETORIC THAN EXPECTED.

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